

Message Text

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16

ACTION ITFE-00

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 INSE-00 DHA-02 ORM-01 IO-10

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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 741

UNCLASKUALA LUMPUR 4472

FOR IATF

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: SREP

SUBJ: FIRST GROUP OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES DEPARTS

MALAYSIA FOR GUAM

1. THE FIRST GROUP OF 154 VIETNAMESE REFUGEES DEPARTED FOR GUAM FROM SUBANG APRT, KUALA LUMPUR VIA PANAM BOEING 707 CHARTER FLIGHT AT 2130 HRS ON 29 JUL. AFTER BEING HOUSED FOR THREE MONTHS ON THE ISLAND OF PULAU PERHENTIAN, 12 MILES OFF THE NORTHEAST COAST OF MALAYSIA, THEY WERE FERRIED FROM THE ISLAND TO THE MAINLAND ON 24 JUL. THEY WERE GIVEN MEDICAL SCREENINGS, INCLUDING CHEST X-RAYS, BY A TEAM OF SIX MALAYSIAN DOCTORS; AND TEMPORARILY SHELTERED IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL AWAITING THE FLIGHT TO GUAM. ON DEPARTURE DAY THE REFUGEES TRAVELLED BY BUS AND TRUCK TO KOTA BAHRU AIRPORT, DISTANCE OF 40 MILES, IN LATE AFTERNOON. THEY FLEW IN TWO CHARTERED MALAYSIAN AIR FORCE CARIBOU ACFT AND ONE MALAYSIAN AIRLINE CHARTER 737 TO KUALA LUMPUR, ARRIVING ABOUT 1830 HRS.

2. MALAYSIAN RED CROSS VOLUNTEERS SERVED THEM HOT TEA, HOT COFFEE, MILK AND A HOT MEAL OF VIETNAMESE NOODLES LIBERALLY DOUSED WITH NUOC MAM FISH SAUCE, A REAL TREAT OF THEIR FAVORITE FOODS WHICH THEY HAD NOT HAD

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SINCE ARRIVING IN MALAYSIA.

3. JUST PRIOR TO BOARDING THE AIRCRAFT THE LEADER OF THE GROUP ASSISTED BY SEVERAL TEENAGE BOYS ASSEMBLED THE 43 CHILDREN, AGES 5 TO 18, IN TIERED ROWS FROM SMALLEST IN FRONT TO THE TALLEST IN THE BACK. THE LEADER EXPLAINED THAT THE CHILDREN HAD BEEN BOY SCOUTS AND GIRL SCOUTS IN VIETNAM WHERE THEY HAD LEARNED SONGS WHICH THEY CONTINUED TO PRACTICE AND TO SING ON THE ISLAND. HE SAID THE CHILDREN WOULD LIKE TO SING TWO VIETNAMESE SONGS TO EXPRESS THEIR APPRECIATION TO THE GOM, MALAYSIAN RED CROSS, AND THE USG. FOLLOWING A SHORT, HEARTFELT SPEECH OF THANKS BY THE LEADER, THE CHILDREN SANG OUT IN LUSTY, PRACTICED VOICES. ALL OF THE CHILDREN KNEW THE LYRICS AND SANG WITH LOUD CONFIDENCE. AS THE REFUGEES BOARDED THE AIRCRAFT, MANY SHOOK OUR HANDS AND SAID THEIR INDIVIDUAL THANKS TO THE GOM AND THE USG.
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